ON SCENE

THE NATIONAL MARITIME SAR REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U.S. COAST GUARD ISSUE No. 5/6-80

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COXSWAINS! Don't Blind the Helo Pilot

The pilot of a Navy helicopter, operating on a night time SAR case with a Coast Guard 41 footer reported that his situation was endangered when, while hovering with personnel on the hoist, the 41 cruised under the rotor blades with flashing blue strobe and a white spotlight on, and partially blinded the flight crew. The pilot further stated that, had the helo experienced an emergency dictating a water landing, lives most certainly would have been jeopardized.

Paragraph 977 of the National SAR Manual says in part about coordinated helicopter/boat rescues: "The boat must be careful not to cross over the helicopter's hoisting cable, not to cross between the survivor and the helicopter, and to always stay within the pilots range of vision". To which might be added: *And never operate lights in such a way as to blind the flight crew.* This latter is a precaution which surface craft must observe anytime they are operating with aircraft.

ON SCENE is a SAR publication published by the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard as a source of information concerning current and proposed procedures as well as new developments in SAR. Articles contained herein are non-record and non-directive.

CGAUX SAR - HAWAII

COAST GUARD LAND OPERATION - ANOTHER MAUI MISSON

By Edward Ketcham Jr. FC-26

On Friday 2 May 1980, a lone motorcyclist/hiker heading up Puukolii Gap, west Maui, did not return home. After 24 hours he was reported as missing to Joe Allison (CG Auxiliary Radio Lahaina). Allison in turn called Herb Santos FS/GR-26, renowned local knowledge expert and "finder".

Santos, accompanied by his son (U.S. Marine home on leave), and Donald Duarte (flotilla trainee) departed immediately in his four weel drive vehicle for the 30 mile drive to the search area. Meanwhile Allison organized the search effort, including notifying CGC CAPE NEWAGEN, JRCC (with a request that Barbers Pt. Air Station be alerted), FC Ed Ketcham (CG Auxiliary Mobile Maalaea One), flotilla member Joe Sadang and others.

Within two hours, two off highway vehicles, two autos, three motorcycles and related personnel were deployed at the 4000 foot leval above Kaanapali, with inter vehicle CB comms. Terrain made it necessary to abandon the highway vehicle, including Mobile Maalaea One, thereby reducing the group's VHF radio capability to a hand held unit made available but one week previous by Commodore Willys Lord at the suggestion of Director of Auxiliary, John Witherspoon.

The missing man was located by the advance group when they observed smoke from a fire he had started, but were unable to approach directly due to an intervening ravine. He was hobbling with aid of two sticks. On Scene Commander Santos determined that, due to the injury and the terrain it was not possible for the subject to walk or be carried out, even though there was a scoop stretcher at hand, and that a rescue helo was advisable.

Upon initiating VHF communications with the hand held unit, it became apparent that the proximity of west Maui mountain peaks precluded contact with Honolulu Communication Station via their Maui unit on Haleakala. At this point Phil Cole, aboard M/V HOOD and operating off Lahaina, volunteered to function as radio rely. Communications were routed (a) advance party to land vehicle via hand held CB, (b) land vehicle to HOOD via hand held VHF unit, (c) HOOD to Honolulu via ship radio, including phone patch with JRCC.

Upon despatch of CG helicopter 1420 from Barbers Pt., flight altitude and the 4000 foot elevation of the search party made direct communications with the helo possible via the handheld VHF from the time the aircraft made its Ops Normal report while off Koko Head, Oahu. The aircraft was requested to make its Maui landfall at Kaanapali Airport at which time it was vectored directly to the communications point on the mountain by visual observation, and from there two miles onward to the survivor.

CG 1420 performed a masterly approach and pickup operation under difficult conditions of high altitude, gusty wind and rough terrain. It effected a quick transfer to Kaanapali Airport.

Chalk up one more person alive today through the joint efforts of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxilliary.

RESCUE & SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT UPDATE

By CWO David Passman

The following information is provided to keep you up to date on the Coast Guard Rescue and Survival Systems Manual (COMDTINST M 10470.10).

This manual has been in the field for just over a year. Everyone concerned will agree that it has done a lot to help units maintain their rescue and survival equipment. The intent of this manual is to be an up-to-date single source of information relevant to rescue and survival systems in use by the Coast Guard which are of general use. This can only be accomplished through an exchange of information between field units and Headquarters. Comments and recommendations are encouraged. The most effective way to do this is by using the tear-out comment form supplied in the back of the manual.

CHANGE 1 ALMOST COMPLETE

The first change to the Rescue and Survival Equipment Manual is now near completion and should be distributed to field units in 1981. In the meantime the following comments should be helpful.

EMERGENCY FLOTATION BAG (EFB)

The Emergency Flotation Bag (EFB) was developed to provide emergency flotation to boats in danger of sinking and is intended to supplement the dewatering pump. Almost all small boats have had their "Boat Allowance List" adjusted to reflect the requirement for the EFB to be carried on-board. The EFB has proven to be extremely effective when used as prescribed. Complete maintance instructions are contained in the manual.

STOKES LITTERS

Change 1 will contain complete instructions on the modification to the stokes litter. The modification will authorize the use of polyester hook and pile tape as restraint straps, which will greatly increase the effectiveness of the litter when used for in-water rescue operations. This modification underwent extensive testing at the Emergency Medical Technican (EMT) School at Petaluma, CA with extremely successful results. Other modifications will include length changes to the 5 inch flotation tubes and a narrower chest pad.

NOTE: Stokes litters previously modified as per previous directives need not be changed unless conditions or intended use dictate. The modified tubes will be attached on an attrition basis only.

PERSONAL MARKER LIGHT (PML)

The Personal Marker Light (PML) now being stocked under stock number CG-6260-01-086-8077 is the authorized replacement light for the one cell flashlight used on abandon-ship personal flotation devices (PFD's). It does not replace other authorized PFD lights or survival kit lights. The PML with a shelf life of 2 1/2 years and constructed to take the normal "hard knocks" of shipboard handling should prove to be a reliable and effective replacement for the old one-cell flashlight.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFD's)

Field testing will commence shortly on an inflatable personal flotation

device (PFD) for both general service and aviation use. The PFD to be tested is the result of years of design and development with you the wearer in mind. Not yet assigned a MK or MOD number, this PFD will attempt to provide the wearer with both comfort and a maximum amount of flotation. The PFD will contain pockets so that all necessary signal and survival items can be carried on the PFD so as to make this not only a PFD but also a survival vest. It is believed that the weight will be light enough and the appearance appealing enough so that boat crews will not mind wearing it under all operation conditions.

RETRO-REFLECTIVE TAPE

Chapter 5 of the COMDTINST M10470.10 contains instructions on the application of retro-reflective tape on PFD's. The steps for the placement of retro-reflective tape on the back of the PFD's were inadvertantly omitted; change 1 will contain all the requirements and instructions for application of the retro-reflective tape.

EXPENDABLE SURFACE CURRENT PROBES (ESCP's)

The fate of the expendable surface current probe (ESCP) is now being examined. A low usage and a high failure rate is suspected. This has generated cause to re-examine this item. The Commandant (G-OSR-4) would appreciate any comments on the operational use of the ESCP.

WET SUITS

The 3/16 inch neoprene foam, nylon lined wet suit that is properly fitted is an extremely valuable hypothermia protection device. A loose fitting wet suit will allow cold water flushing of the suit, thereby drastically reducing its effectiveness. When was the last time you tried your wet suit on?

ELECTRIC FLOAT LANTERN

A few units have reported that the electric float lantern FSN 6230-00-782 0643 are not floating in the vertical position and therefore the mercury switch is not getting activated. The problem is now being examined and units with this equipment should inspect the light for proper working order.

LIFE RAFTS

With life rafts now getting inspected at approved service facilities as listed in COMDTINST M 16714.3, the requirement for semi-annual inspection has been done away with. The Coast Guard Naval Engineering Manual (CG-413) is now being revised to reflect this change

STOCK NUMBERS

An Appendix A is being planned for the manual. This appendix will provide a listing of equipment and information on how to requesition rescue and survival equipment. The below listed FSN's have either changed or were omitted from the first printing of the manual.

ETHAFOAM 220, 5"x108"
9390-01-076-6556

ETHAFOAM 220, 15"x22"
9390-01-076-6670

EMERGENCY FLOTATION BAG (BF-1)
2090-01-089-3863

FREON CANNISTER FOR EFB
6830-01-070-5207

NEOPRENE CEMET (WET SUIT REPAIR)
8040-00-515-2246

DESSICANT BAG (DEWATERING PUMP DRYING AGENT)
6850-00-264-6573

RETRO-REFLECTIVE TAPE "1
9390-01-082-8927

RETRO-REFLECTIVE TAPE 2"
9390-01-078-8660

Hats Off To 7th COAST GUARD DISTRICT

and all

USCG, USN & USMC Units and Personnel

assigned to

CUBAN REFUGEE OPERATIONS

When Cuba opened the gates for emigration during 1980, a veritable hemorrage of refugees fled across the dangerous Florida Strait. The Seventh Coast Guard District was called upon to mount a special operation, first to provide for the safety of those who became in-distress and second to enforce restrictions placed on U.S. craft engaged in the exodus. Personnel and operating units from all over the country were temporarily assigned to help as were Navy and Marine units and personnel. For a time rescue became an everyday occurance.

The magnitude of the operation can be appreciated from a glance at the numbers of Coast Guard units involved, the numbers of persons involved and the broad statistics of assistance rendered.

From 27 April to 13 July the following numbers of Coast Guard units participated. 2 WHEC Cutters, 10 WMEC Cutters, 15 Patrol Boats, 13 UTBs, 14 BOSDETS, 9 Fixed wing aircraft, 3 HH3 Helicopters, 13 HH-52 Helicopters. Total seagoing Coast Guard personnel involved were 1,125. 1,387 vessels were assisted or escorted. These cases involved 52 sinkings, 12 capsizings, 45 abandonments, 27 deaths.

The total number of people assisted was 125,262. The following letter from Commander-In-Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, who provide support, outlines the Navy and Marine Corps part in the operation and praises the cooperative efforts of this unique peace-time operation.

From: Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard

Subj: Sea services response to Cuban refugee exodus

1. On 21 April 1980 intelligence reports indicated that the Castro government would allow Cuban nationals to leave the country via sea routes and emigrate to the U. S. With forces located in Florida, the Coast Guard was the first federal agency to respond to the resultant boatlift of refugees. By 30 April 1980, it was evident that the refugee exodus was

massive and that additional maritime support was required. On 1 May 1980, at JCS direction, CINCLANT commenced providing Navy and Marine Corps forces to assist in the humanitarian effort both afloat and ashore at Key West.

2. In the at-sea phase of this operation, U. S. Navy ships assigned to Commander, Joint Task Force 140 were placed under tactical control of Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District. Eventually, one LHA (with embarked helos), two LPD's, two LST's, ten MSO's, and five PB's were deployed to South Florida waters. U.S. Navy maritime patrol aircraft conducted ocean surveillance and U.S. Marine Corps fighter aircraft operated in support of the Coast Guard.

3. These units assisted in continuous reconnaissance of northbound and southbound traffic in the Straits of Florida and command and control of surface and air SAR forces. Navy ships and boats worked alongside the Coast Guard, sometimes in adverse weather, to rescue refugees from sinking, unseaworthy, and overcrowded craft. Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel worked together in the towing, repair, and resupply of refugee vessels, and in the feeding, clothing, berthing and medical care of the the refugees. During the five-month period ending 1 October 1980, the joint-service force processed more than 125,000 persons.

4. Execution of this difficult task in support of national policy with minimum advance notice required close interservice coordination and cooperation. Such interaction at all levels of command was outstanding and demonstrated the superb capability of the Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard team to respond to a unique peacetime contingency operation unparalleled in the nation's history. As the country's primary maritime search and rescue and law enforcement agency, the Coast Guard role in coordinating all naval forces was exemplary. The professional manner in which the Coast Guard accomplished this challenging mission is in keeping with the highest traditions of the maritime services.

SAR DATA ENTRY WORKSTATIONS

In a continuing program of providing direct access for users of automated systems, the Office of Operations and the Office of the Comptroller are cooperating in a program at the First, Third, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Eleventh, Thirteenth, and Seventeenth Coast Guard Districts to permit District (osr) direct data entry for SAR Assistance Reports.

This program involves the procurement and installation of a remote keystation to the Data 100 intelligent terminal at the District Office. The intelligent terminal is further connected to the central computer at the Transportation Computer Center in DOT Headquarters, Washington, D.C. The object of the installation is to provide more timely and accurate data input to the SAR Data System. It is patterned after a pilot program at the Fifth District, and other districts where Aids to Navigation (SANDS) information is similarly handled.

Data entry is expedited by the availability of the terminal to the responsible program office thereby avoiding delays inherent in a central data entry facility. Also, the key operators, while not as efficient as trained key operators, have an understanding of the data being entered and can better control its accuracy. In the Fifth District, the data input error rate was reduced by a factor of ten using this approach.

Eventually, most if not all entry and retrieval of computerized data in the Coast Guard will be accomplished by means of standard terminals to be procured beginning in FY81.

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